

Abstract 538

TITLE: Gain-Framed Messages Increase HIV Testing Behavior in Promotion-Oriented Women

AUTHORS: Apanovitch, AM; McCarthy, D; Salovey, P

BACKGROUND: This study investigated the effectiveness of differentially framed messages designed to encourage low-income women to obtain an HIV test. We examined the influence of systematically different educational videos that were either gain- or loss-framed, emphasizing either the benefits of being screened or costs of not being screened for HIV. Individuals completed measures of regulatory focus, an individual difference variable that assesses the saliency of two motives in people's lives: approaching pleasure (promotion-orientation) and avoiding negative outcomes (prevention-oriented). We predicted an interaction of framing and regulatory focus, such that gain-framed messages would be more persuasive for promotion-oriented women and loss-framed messages would be more persuasive for prevention-oriented women.

METHODS: One hundred thirty-four women completed a baseline interview that included the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ) (Harlow et al., in press) measuring promotion and prevention orientation. They were then randomly assigned to watch a framed video aimed at persuading women to get an HIV test. The women were grouped in terms of a high promotion or high prevention regulatory focus. HIV-testing behavior was assessed again at a 3-month follow-up for these women.

RESULTS: Overall, 29% of the women who completed follow-up obtained an HIV test within 3 months. Promotion-oriented women were more persuaded by gain-framed messages (59%) than loss-framed messages (25%) but prevention-oriented women were equally persuaded by gain- (28%) and loss-framed messages (21%). To identify factors associated with HIV testing at follow-up, we examined previous HIV testing behavior, framing (gain/loss), regulatory focus (promotion/prevention), and the framing by regulatory focus interaction using a stepwise logistic regression analysis. Previous testing behavior ($b=.14$, $se=.07$, $OR=1.15$, $95\%CI=1.01, 1.32$, $p<.05$) and the framing by regulatory focus interaction term ($b=.54$, $se=.23$, $OR=1.72$, $95\%CI=1.09, 2.72$, $p<.05$) significantly predicted whether women obtained an HIV test 3 months after baseline.

CONCLUSIONS: Women with a promotion-oriented focus were more persuaded by gain- than loss-framed messages. Prevention-oriented women, however, were equally persuaded by both gain- and loss-framed videos. These findings suggest that differences in HIV-testing decision making may actually be a function of both the way a message is framed and the individual's psychological style (regulatory focus) with which they process the message. Stressing the benefits of getting an HIV test seems to increase HIV testing behavior for women whose dominant motive in life is approaching positive outcomes rather than avoiding negative outcomes.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Anne Marie Apanovitch

Address: Yale University, Psychology Dept.

P.O. Box 208205

New Haven, CT 06520

Telephone: (203) 432-2332

Fax: (203) 432-8430

E-mail: annemarie.apanovitch@yale.edu